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ABSTRACT

A study of 13 disadvantaged first grade students enrolled in a 4-year remedial education program was conducted to determine program effectiveness in terms of academic skill and self-concept improvement. A model was developed which used the learning center approach within classroom boundaries, and involved a psychologist, a reading teacher, classroom teachers (for grades K-3), and volunteers. The teacher-directed educational program consisted of a highly-structured, slow-paced teaching method; materials such as basal readers, language development kits, and audiovisual equipment; a parent involvement component; and preservice and inservice training for teachers. Results obtained by comparing Ss with controls from regular grades showed that experimental Ss progressed faster in word recognition, did not differ significantly in IQ level, attained a significantly higher level of maturity, and showed a significantly lower incidence of personality and interpersonal adjustment problems. (A diagram illustrating the model and statistical tables are also provided.) (SB)

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PROJECT TITLE

Instructional Support --
Ego Enhancement for
Potential School Dropouts

LOCATION:

Beekmantown Central School
Box 829, Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901
Dr. George C. Saunders, Superintendent

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Three basic concepts are essential for successful student achievement--perceiving, believing and behaving. As the child perceives himself through the eyes of others, as he believes himself on the basis of past successes or failures, he will behave accordingly in the classroom setting.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Cont'd

Goals and Objectives:

The immediate goal is a continuation of preventing failure as we maintain present efforts and expand into the intermediate level. We anticipate one month's growth for each month of teaching time for youngsters presently involved in the program and one month's growth for each month of teaching time for youngsters in the expansion effort.

Overall goal in terms of general objectives include the development of academic skill in language, reading and math. In more specific terms this encompasses:

- developing oral communication from teacher to fellow students
- lengthening attention span through on-task performance
- increasing students expressive and receptive language performance
- refining concepts of body image, laterality, and directionality
- increasing learning of spatial vocabulary in teacher-directed activities
- teaching concepts necessary for logical thought patterns
- developing hidden verbal skills--rhyming, blending, and sequencing
- associating visual symbols and pictures with the written and spoken word
- decoding the printed word
- developing a sense of number order
- preserving number and letter order through symbols
- ordering events in time through solid left-right orientation

The underlying goal of the total effort is enhancement of the self image. Self image is a product of an individual's past relationship with his environment; it greatly influences his behavior toward future situations. If a person's self image can be altered, his overall behavior will also be influenced. This has special significance for educators. Research has seemed to indicate that children with low self images achieve less well in school. If this is true, then raising the self image stands in equal importance to increasing academic competence in prevention of failure.

Techniques aimed at enhancement of self image are incorporated into teaching procedures used in this project. These include use of:

- immediate feedback
- positive reinforcement
- on-task performance
- proper corrective procedures
- scheduling procedures which allow a child to move at his own pace

Context

Beekmantown Central School District encompasses a large rural area in which cultural and economic deprivation are the rule rather than the exception. Many of our children come from families who have lived on the land in a marginal fashion for generations. Their home conditions fail to build skills which allow them to progress at a normal rate with typical group teaching methods and approaches to curriculum. These children begin school lacking linguistic and cultural information considered normal for their age, and are therefore prone to failure. Many become academic discards almost before education has really begun. In this they too often follow a pattern set by their parents. The basic goal of this project is to change this pattern and to permit these children to enjoy a more productive and satisfying life style.

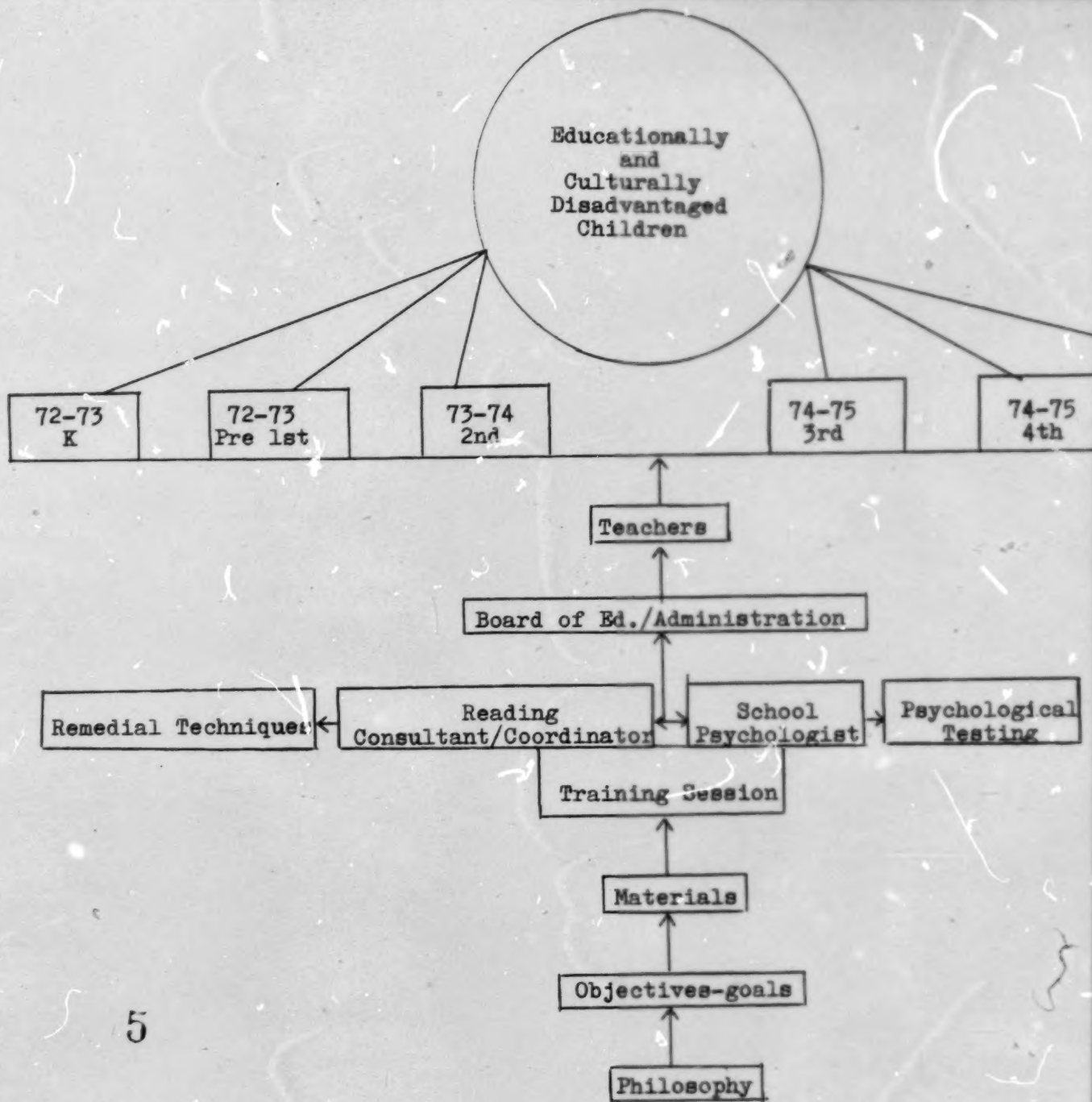
Program Description

Prior to 1972 there was a weakness in remedial services for children from culturally disadvantaged homes. Those children we placed in sections that were limited to twenty, but because of smaller teacher/pupil ratio no remedial help was given. The school staff felt the need for a new thrust to focus on this group starting at kindergarten level. The main objective was preventing failure and ego enhancement in reducing the number of potential school drop outs.

A model was developed which focused on the target group so that every child would be covered by 1976. Since it would be impossible for the remedial teacher to reach all of these youngsters, the classroom teachers were trained in remedial techniques. The role of the reading teacher initially was to be a teacher-trainer and to lend to classroom support. The classroom teacher became the key to success and the support of the reading teacher, the continuing catalyst. This relationship between classroom teachers and the reading teacher enabled us to identify and deal with every child's problem. A pattern of consistency was developed in teaching techniques in academic areas and in coping with behavior problems. The reading teacher's room became a free reading room for individualizing reading for all youngsters on one-hand and took on the atmosphere of an intensive care unit for those youngsters severely disabled.

The learning center approach was developed within classroom boundaries to enable teachers to cope with each child's learning problem. Learning deficiencies were diagnosed by psychological tests. Volunteers assisted with learning centers and children were paired within classes to work on deficient areas; thereby freeing teacher to spend more time in small groups.

The following model was developed to initiate and continue the program on a yearly basis, 1972-1976:



Educationally
and
Culturally
Disadvantaged
Children

73-74
2nd

74-75
3rd

74-75
4th

75-76
5th

Teachers

Board of Ed./Administration

Reading
Consultant/Coordinator

School
Psychologist

Psychological
Testing

Training Session

Materials

Objectives-goals

Philosophy

-3-

Curricula

Basic to academic success in all areas of learning is communication. Children from experientially deprived homes do not have adequate facility with which to clarify the spoken word from teachers or fellow students. Basic concepts must be developed in a setting in which they will be used within the classroom. Concepts and the language used to teach these concepts must be taught in a logical manner.

Reading and arithmetic must be 1) taught in the clearest, most logical approach, 2) taught systematically, 3) tested regularly and 4) reinforced with much praise and encouragement.

Central to an effective curricular approach is 1) diagnosis of the initial readiness to the learner, 2) appropriate selection of learning materials based upon prescriptive measures and 3) highly structured learning materials to facilitate the most efficient learning.

The methodology is that of directed-teacher instruction which runs counter to the wide-spread trend toward child-directed teaching. The approach is warm but disciplined. It provides for a thorough teaching of new materials at a slow pace to insure a successful foundation for sequential learning and thereby prevent an unreadiness for future learning tasks. It allows for a fast pacing of those materials already learned but which need mastery. It is a highly structured approach but from this structure emerges freedom to learn.

Materials

Materials currently being used include the following: co-basal readers -- language centered, linguistic, and phonetic approaches; supplementary readers, reading labs; remedial reading readers; comprehension booklets; controlled vocabulary and spelling patterns; phonetic workbooks, game kits; teacher made materials; basic math tests; supplementary workbooks; practice math tapes, math labs; manipulative devices; language development kits -- Peabody, EBC, Rebus, ITPA Language development SRA Listening Skills, DLM perception Training -- Figure Ground, Visual-Motor, Auditory Discrimination, Imagery, Memory; directional & percepto mats, Frostig materials; AV equipment -- filmstrip projectors, cassette players, record players, talking page, reader mates, controlled readers, tachistoscope, flash-X, language master; overhead projectors, auto-vance II Study Mate, filmstrip previewers, listening centers, slide viewers, movie projectors, opaque projector, tachisto-film-flasher, audio-flash card reader.

Staffing

Staffing presently includes one psychologist, one reading teacher and classroom teachers at the following levels -- Kindergarten, Pre-1st, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades.

Time Involved

All teaching is done on regular classroom time. Parental conferences, small group conferences, consultations involving the psychologist, nurse or administration are held after school hours.

Parental Involvement

The extent to which a child is experimentally deprived is directly associated with the quantity and quality of interaction with adults. The circumstances of economic deprivation, such as large families, crowded conditions, broken families, often reduce the child-adult exchanges. A parent involvement program can not change many of the physical circumstances of poverty, but it can improve the quality of the parent-child interaction by helping parents overcome their own limitations due to low educational achievement. Parents can be shown how to help their own positive self image. A good program can also reduce the feeling of alienation and powerlessness by demonstrating to parents that at least in the area of their children's education, what they say and do can make a difference.

Our parent involvement program helps parents become involved in the education of their children:

- by explaining and demonstrating materials to parents, soliciting their ideas and suggestions
- by providing materials that can be used in the home
- by involving them as volunteer teachers or in other capacities when feasible
- by contractual agreement to give 5 min. a day to listen to their child read

Pre-Service/Inservice Training

Pre-service training sessions are held the week prior to the opening of school. Workshops involve teachers in--

- new teaching procedures for correction procedures
- new techniques for developing reading and math concepts
- explaining innovative devices
- demonstrating new equipment
- preparing materials
- setting up grouping and regrouping procedures
- explaining tests and evaluation instruments
- developing learning centers
- dispensing materials

In-service training sessions continue during the entire school year. These sessions involve the following:

- teaching demonstrations when requested by class-room teachers
- "rap" sessions to discuss strengths and weaknesses of programs in operation
- evaluation of teacher's pacing of instruction
- assessing test performance of pupils for on-going prescriptive measures
- discussing changes in behavior of students as it relates to the self image
- relating feedback from parents
- implementing new ideas at strategic points

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

In order to test the effectiveness of this program, an experimental group of 13 students was selected from a first grade remedial class in 1973. These were matched as to age, sex, intelligence, and socioeconomic level with a like number of students attending regular grades in the same building.

A matched pairs T Test was completed to ascertain whether significant differences existed between the two groups on the May 1973 S.A.T. Word Reading grade scores.

The difference obtained was so large that there was only 1 chance in 1,000 that it could be due to chance.

Table 1: $t=5.11$, $d.f.=12$, $p<.001$

	Mean S.A.T. Word Reading Grade Score	S.D.
Experimental Group	1.53	.12
Control Group	2.14	.43

A significant difference of approximately 6 months in mean reading grade scores was obtained in favor of the control group.

In April 1975 the groups were again compared to ascertain their word recognition abilities. Their W.R.A.T. Word Recognition Test grade scores are presented in Table 2:

Table 2

$t=1.14$, $d.f.=12$, $p>.05$

	Mean W.R.A.T. Word Reading Grade Score	S.D.
Experimental Group	3.56	.85
Control Group	3.95	.87

There were no significant differences in Mean W.R.A.T. Grade Scores obtained.

Mean IQ scores obtained in January 1973 were compared as follows:

Table 3: $t=.47$, $d.f.=12$, $p>.05$

	Mean IQ	S.D.
Experimental	96.30	10.61
Control	98.15	9.80

No significant differences in mean IQ's of the two groups was obtained.

Mental maturity scores obtained in April 1975 from Human Figure Drawings scored according to Koppitz's Scale were compared:

Table 4: $t=2.55$, $d.f.=12$, $p<.05$

	Mean H.F.D. Mental Maturity Score	S.D.
Experimental Group	4.07	1.18
Control Group	2.76	1.36

A significant difference in Mental Maturity in favor of the experimental group was demonstrated, whereas none had been shown to exist in 1/73.

Comparison of Emotional Indicators obtained from Human Figure Drawings in 4/75 according to Koppitz's Scale:

Table 5: $t=4.91$, $d.f.=12$, $p .02$

	Mean H.F.D. Emotional Indicators	S.D.
Experimental Group	1.23	109
Control Group	2.61	189

The experimental group has significantly fewer emotional indicators. Differences this large could be expected by chance only 2 times in 100.

Comparison of Personality Total Adjustment T Scores obtained from classroom teachers ratings on the Cassell Child Behavior Adjustment Rating Scales in April 1975:

Table 6: $t=1.41$, $d.f.=n-1.12$, significant at .1 level

	Mean Cassell PTAs T Scores	S.D.
Experimental Group	49.61	6.56
Control Group	45.46	8.15

The experimental group had significantly fewer indications of emotional maladjustment according to teachers ratings. Differences of this size could be expected by chance only 10 times in 100. Three students in the control group showed definite indications of emotional problems, whereas only 1 experimental group child was so designated.

Discussion

At the beginning of the study in May 1973 students in the control group were approximately six months ahead of the experimental group in SAT reading recognition. In April 1975 there was no longer a significant difference between the groups in this area, as measured by the WRAT, suggesting that the experimental group students had progressed at a faster rate.

In 1973 students in the 2 groups did not differ significantly in IQ level; by 1975 the experimental group had attained a level of mental maturity significantly higher than that of the control group. In addition, experimental group students showed a significantly lower incidence of personality and interpersonal adjustment problems.

The foregoing strongly suggests that the remedial groups are fulfilling their objectives of enhancing self image by providing an optimal climate for learning. Disadvantaged children who remained in regular grades, and in many cases, repeated a grade not only failed to progress at the same rate academically and intellectually, but were more prone to emotional problems.

The table below shows Mean Gates McGinite reading scores for 13 current remedial 2nd grade students, showing progress between June 1973 and March 1975:

GATE MCGINITE READING TEST
MEAN GRADE SCORES

	Vocabulary	Comprehension
June 1973 (Pre 1st)	1.4	1.5
March 1974 (1st grade)	2.5	2.4
March 1975 (2nd grade)	2.8	2.7
Vocab.-1 month above grade level as of 3/75 Comprehension-at grade level as of 3/75		

The table below shows mean Gates McGinite reading scores for 17 current remedial 1st grade students between June 1974 and March 1975.

Gates McGinite Reading Test
Mean Grade Scores

	Vocabulary	Comprehension
June 1974	1.2	1.2
Jan. 1975	1.5	1.7
Mar. 1975	2.3	2.2

Vocab.-5 months above grade level as of 3/75
Comprehension-4 months above grade level as of 3/75